Searching for your Civil War Ancestors

Fairport Public Library Genealogy Club

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https://www.fairportlibrary.org/

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Slides are Online

- At www.dennisAhogan.com, click on Lectures and Handouts tab
- Select a handout and save to your computer, then you can click on links to try out websites
- The detailed handout file:
  - ➢ **Course Civil War Handout**

The Civil War

12 Apr 1861, Battle at Fort Sumter, SC

9 Apr 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, VA

13 May 1865, Last Battle at Palmito Ranch, TX

19 Jun 1865, General Order No. 3 announced freedom for the last slaves of the Confederacy in Texas. "Juneteenth"

360,222 Union deaths and 258,000 Confederate deaths

Salary: $13 per month for a Private

At the time of the war, Irish & other immigrants were generally not welcomed with open arms in many circles. Fighting for their new country was seen as a way to earn credibility and/or acceptance. In some cases their naturalization was sped up.

This presentation only scratches the surface. There is essentially an unlimited supply of research material about the Civil War.

Branches of Service

Army: Volunteers vs. Regulars. Most who served during the Civil War, enlisted as Volunteers for units from their home state. Regulars were serving prior to the war mostly on the western frontier. The U.S. Military Academy had been established in 1802 at West Point, NY and had trained many of the officers on both sides.

Navy: The Union had as many as 51,000 sailors while the Confederates had about 4,000. The U.S. Naval Academy was established in 1850 at Annapolis, MD. The Academy moved to Rhode Island during the War.

Marine: The Union had about 4,000 marines while the Confederates had about 600.

Civilian Service

There were also many civilians directly employed or contracted, including doctors, nurses, teamsters, cooks. Beyond that, not many families in the U.S. went unaffected. Women often took on new roles such as doing farm work or working in factories.

The Draft (est. 1863)

Able-bodied men between ages 20 and 45 were required to be enrolled.

Draftees were chosen by lottery.

Draftees could avoid service either by paying a $300 fee or by hiring a substitute.

Civil War Draft Registrations, www.ancestry.com ($)

Army Unit Hierarchy

Companies: about 100 men, lead by a captain, 1st lieutenant, 2nd lieutenant, 8 sergeants, 8 corporals. Artillery companies were referred to as batteries and cavalry companies were called troops. Companies were named by letter from A to M. J was skipped to avoid confusion with the letter I.

Battalions: 2 to 6 companies led by a major. Some companies and battalions were independent of regiments.

Regiments: 10 companies (infantry) and were lead by a colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and 2 or 3 majors. Usually 12 companies made up artillery and cavalry regiments. Battalions and regiments were named by number, 1st, 2nd, etc. Caution - In some cases, a state has multiple 1st, 2nd, etc. battalions or regiments.

Brigades: 2 or more regiments lead by a colonel or brigadier general.

Divisions: 2 or more brigades

Corps: 2 or more divisions

Armies: 1 or more corps

Identify Your Ancestors Who Served

Typically males born 1818 through 1843 are candidates. Older and younger men did serve (born 1790 – 1850), but those cases were not common. Even some women served – disguised as men!

Don't limit your search to direct ancestors. Brothers, cousins, uncles, nephews, in-laws may have served and their military records may include important family info.

Locate the candidates in the 1860 U.S. Census. Most served in Voluntary units which were state-based. In most cases, the state where they resided at the time of the 1860 census will be the same state where they enlisted.

1860 US - free at www.familysearch.org; free at www.libraryweb.org/heritage.html with a Monroe County library card; Ancestry.com, free at many Monroe County libraries with card, at Family History Centers, at OWWL

Additional Helpful Census

1865 NY (other state census may include similar info) – free at www.familysearch.org. Includes unit and service dates.

1890 US Veterans & Widows Schedule- free at www.familysearch.org; Ancestry.com, free at many Monroe County libraries with card, at Family History Centers, at OWWL. Includes unit and service dates. The veteran did not have to have been alive in 1890 to be included.

1910 US – free at www.familysearch.org; free at www.libraryweb.org/heritage.html with a Monroe County library card; Ancestry.com, free at many Monroe County libraries with card, at Family History Centers, at OWWL.

1930 US - Ancestry.com, free at many Monroe County libraries with card, at Family History Centers, at OWWL; footnote.com, free at Family History Centers

Search Rosters of Soldiers and Sailors

Caution – you will encounter multiple men with the same name, multiple spellings of the same name, records for a single individual recorded in multiple files because of multiple spellings of the same name, records for a single individual recorded in multiple files because he served in more than one unit, etc.

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors (CWSS) – free at https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm . For each soldier found, gives easy access to regimental history and basic info about each of its battles.

There are many other sources of rosters, although CWSS is a great site and seems to be very thorough. County histories published after the war usually have rosters and can be found at local libraries and museums. http://www.usgenweb.org/ can lead you to other resources.

Procure Service Record for NY Volunteers

This is an excellent resource for those who served in a Volunteer unit which originated in New York State. A one page form includes name, age, date and place of enlistment, rank, company, regiment, date and place of discharge, birthplace (usually just state or country), occupation, height, color of eyes, hair, and complexion. Often the form is hard to read.

You need to know the following in order to procure records (the research steps above should lead you to this info for each of your candidates):

Infantry or Cavalry or Artillery or Colored Troops or Engineers

Regiment (optional)

How to order a service record ($3)

Go to
http://www.archives.nysed.gov/common/archives/files/res_topics_mi_warsvc_form.pdf

Enter name and regiment info & click *Find*

If there's more than one person with the same name in a regiment, you will receive records for all of them at no extra charge.

Click to Order, fill in the form and mail it with a check for $3.

Records from the National Archives

There are 2 types of Civil War records that can be procured:

Pension application files

Compiled military service records

The National Archives suggests that genealogists:

first order the pension application files (often contains great info relevant to the family history).

If no pension application is found, then order the compiled military service records (usually contains only info about their service record, although in some cases they include some family history).

Sources of copies:

Order copies from the National Archives (see next page)

Order copies from private sources such as American Civil War Ancestor (http://www.acwancestor.org/) (see next page)

Visit the National Archives and make copies yourself. For rates see http://www.archives.gov/research/order/fees.html

How to Order Pension Application File from NARA

There is not a pension application for everyone that served. You can search for your candidates in the Civil War Pension Index Cards - free at www.familysearch.org (3.0 million records). Even if you don't find a candidate in that file, you can still order a pension application. You will not be charged if the National Archives does not find an application.

Go to

http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records.html#natf85

- Under *Military Pension/Bounty Land Warrant Applications*, click *Download the Form* in order to verify that you have the required information to order.

Under *Military Pension/Bounty Land Warrant Applications*, click *Order Online* to order.

You will have to choose between 2 pension options:

Full Pension Application File-Civil War, 1860 or Later ($80 for 1st 100 pages & $.70 per page beyond 100 pages)

Pension Documents Packet ($30)

The Form 85 instructions describe both options. In theory, the $30 packet has the sections which most likely contain genealogical info, but you will have no indication of what you might be missing by not ordering the full option.

These pension applications are for Union only. The Form 85 instructions give info about Confederate pensions.

You can order from a private source such as American Civil War Ancestor

(http://www.acwancestor.org/). ($60 for 1st 200 images & $.25 per image beyond 200)

How to Order Compiled Military Service Record from NARA

Go to http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records.html#natf86

- Under *Military Service Records*, click *Download the Form* in order to verify that you have the required information to order.

Under *Military Service Records*, click *Order Online* to order ($30).

These service records are for Army only. The Form 86 instructions give info about other branches

You can order from a private source such as American Civil War Ancestor (http://www.acwancestor.org/). ($27.50)